

82-1411

NO.

Office-Supreme Court, U.S.  
FILED

FEB 22 1983

ALEXANDER L. STEVAS,  
CLERK

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

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October Term, 1982

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ROBERT J. KONDRAT  
Petitioner

vs.

RICHARD MARTINET  
Respondent

---

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI  
TO THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

---

BRIEF OF PETITIONER FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

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Willoughby Hills, OH 44092  
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## QUESTIONS PRESENTED FOR REVIEW

(I) Are the actions of libel and slander within the scope of elected and appointed municipal officials duties?

(II) Is a municipality obligated to expend public funds on the defense of elected and appointed officials that have admitted to libel and slander?

(III) Is due process of law and equal protection of the laws denied when the state upholds that libel and slander are justifiable actions within the scope of elected and appointed public officials duties.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
QUESTIONS PRESENTED FOR REVIEW.....	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	11
TABLE OF AUTHORITIES.....	11
OPINIONS BELOW.....	1
JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT.....	2
CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS & STATUTES INVOLVED.....	2
STATEMENT OF THE CASE.....	3
ARGUMENT.....	4
CONCLUSION.....	5

## TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

U.S. CONSTITUTION, FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT..	2
STATE OF OHIO v. KONDRAT, 76 CR 473, Lake County Common Pleas, 1977.....	4
KONDRAT v. BYRON, ET AL, 77 CIV 0918, Lake County Common Pleas.....	5
MACKO v. BYRON, ET AL, C77-1158, U.S. Dist. Crt. N.D. of OH.....	5
APPENDIX.....	6

The Supreme Court of Ohio in Case No. 82-1633  
on January 26, 1983 overruled a motion for an order  
directing the court of appeals to certify its record.

NO.

**SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

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**BRIEF OF PETITIONER FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI**

**OPINIONS BELOW**

The Supreme Court of Ohio in Case No. 82-1655 on January 26, 1983 overruled a motion for an order directing the court of appeals to certify its record.



On October 18, 1982, the Eleventh District Court of Appeals of Ohio, in Case No. CA 9-022 affirmed the decision of Lake County Common Pleas Court of September 9, 1981 in Case No. 79 CIV 0932 which granted Respondent's Summary Judgment.

#### JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT

A Petition for a Writ of Certiorari is sought of the order of the Supreme Court of Ohio entered January 26, 1983. The statutory provision conferred on this court to review the order or decree in question by Writ of Certiorari, is the supremacy clause of the United States Constitution which establishes that federal law shall prevail over state and local laws where state or local laws interferes with federal law.

#### CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND STATUTES INVOLVED

The constitutional provision involved is the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitutional which guarantees that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor denied equal protection of the laws.

## STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Petitioner filed in the court of first instance a complaint and motion for injunction asking the court to enjoin the Respondent, the Finance Director for the city of Willoughby Hills, from dispensing funds from the city treasury for the purpose of payment for litigation stemming from alleged false and defamatory statements made by a city official.

Petitioner had exercised his right under the First Amendment, the right to petition his government for a redress of grievances. As a circulator of petitions which sought the recall of public officials, a city official branded the Petitioner as a "malcontent that by using the recall process attempted to overthrow the government".

The court of first instance granted the Respondent a summary judgment. Petitioner appealed to the Eleventh District Court of Appeals of Ohio citing the Fourteenth Amendment. The court of second instance rendered a decision which in part was based on the contention that the conduct of the public was within the scope of his councilmatic duty.

Petitioner appealed to the Ohio Supreme Court which overruled the motion for an order directing the court of appeals to certify its record.

#### ARGUMENT

Petitioner's participation in the affairs of local government was limited to exercising the right guaranteed by the First Amendment. The right to petition the government for a redress of grievances has never been considered as treasonous or overthrowing the government. The Petitioner attempted to halt the steady flow of public funds being expended on the defense of public officials who had been exposed of acting in concert to fabricate criminal activity against Petitioner (State of Ohio v. Kondrat, Case No. 76 CR 473, Lake County Common Pleas, 1977), and others, and who had libeled and slandered Petitioner.

A councilman that calls the citizenry malcontents for using the recall process as attempting to overthrow government, does not perform within his councilmatic duty. Petitioner has every right to petition its government lawfully without being

branded that he is rebellious, a revolutionist or traitor.

Furthermore, when a councilman has admitted to the truth of acting in concert, and to the allegations of libel and slander (Kondrat v. Byron, et al, Case No. 77 CIV 0918, Lake County Common Pleas Court), he is not entitled to public funding for his defense. In action brought by other residents, the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Ohio, has ordered the city dismissed but not the individuals. The order in the case of Macko v. Byron. et al, Case No. C77-1158, U.S. Dist. Crt. N.D. of OH, is appended hereto.

#### CONCLUSION

Public officials who engage in alleged libel and slander should not be entitled to public funding for their defense. The actions are an abuse of office and the costs are to be borne the individual. Petitioner requests that the Writ of Certiorari be granted.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Robert J. Kondrat, pro se  
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Telephone (216) 944 0141

## APPENDIX

## Table of Contents

	Page
Judgment Entry in the Court of Common Pleas of Lake County Ohio.....	7
Judgment Entry and Opinion in the Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eleventh District	9
Motion Overruled by the Supreme Court of Ohio.....	19
Memorandum and Order in the Case of Macko, et al v. Byron, et al, C77-1158, in the U.S. Dist. Crt. N.D. of Ohio	20

FILED

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IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
DIVISION OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS  
LAKE COUNTY, OHIO

1981 SEP-9 AM 8:18

ANDY J. TOTIN  
CLERK OF COURT

ROBERT J. KONDRAT, et al,

Plaintiff,

vs

RICHARD MARTINET,

Defendant.

RECEIVED  
SEP 15 1981

CASE NO. 79 CIV 0932

JUDGMENT ENTRY

The Court comes on to consider the motion for summary judgment as filed September 22, 1980 by defendant. The Court considers the briefs submitted by counsel and the "Reply to Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgment" as filed by Plaintiff Robert J. Kondrat, pro se, on October 22, 1980.

The Court further considers the statements made at pre-trial which was attended by Attorney Abraham Cantor and Mr. Robert J. Kondrat, which pre-trial was held on the 31st day of August, 1981. Plaintiff Robert J. Kondrat made an oral motion during said pre-trial hearing to have the within motion for summary judgment continued until the Sixth United States Circuit Court of Appeals rules on a case of his pending before them, captioned Robert J. Kondrat, Plaintiff-Appellant versus The United States Department of Justice, Defendant-Appellee, Case Number C81-274, for the reason that he is requesting the United States Attorney General to Intervene and/or represent his interest in both the matter before the Federal Court and in this Court in the within case. Upon examination of the papers filed with the Sixth Circuit, as generously furnished by plaintiff Robert J. Kondrat to this Judge, the Court finds that plaintiff's motion for stay of proceedings and/or continuance in the within case should be and is hereby overruled, subject to reconsideration should the Federal Court ultimately

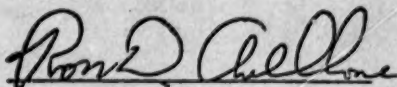


compel the United States Attorney General to represent Mr. Robert J. Kondrat in this case.

The Court finds that by reason of the admissions deemed to have been made during the discovery process in this case and considering the arguments of counsel and Mr. Kondrat, that the motion for summary judgment ought to be and hereby is granted.

WHEREFORE, summary judgment in favor of the defendant, Richard Martinet, is hereby granted and the within case is hereby dismissed.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ross D. Avellone", is written over a horizontal line.

ROSS D. AVELLONE, JUDGE

CC: Abraham Cantor, Esq.  
Robert J. Kondrat, pro se



STATE OF OHIO

COUNTY OF LAKE

) SS.

ELEVENTH DISTRICT

9

ROBERT J. KONDRAT

Appellant

- vs -

RICHARD MARTINET

Appellee

FILED  
COURT OF APPEALS

OCT 18 1982

ANDY J. TOTIN  
CLERK OF COURT  
LAKE COUNTY, OHIO

JUDGMENT ENTRY

CASE NO. 9-022

RECEIVED  
OCT 19 1982

This cause came on to be heard upon the Record in the Trial Court, and was briefed and argued by counsel for the parties.

Upon consideration whereof, this Court finds no error prejudicial to the appellant and, therefore, the judgment of the Trial Court is affirmed. Each Assignment of Error was reviewed by the Court and disposed of as set forth in this Court's Opinion, which is incorporated herein by reference.

It is ordered that the costs shall be taxed against the appellant

This Court finds there were reasonable grounds for this appeal.

It is ordered that a special mandate issue out of this Court directing the Trial Court to carry this judgment into execution. A certified copy of this entry shall constitute the mandate pursuant to Rule 27 of the Rules of Appellate Procedure. Exceptions.

  
JUDGE JOSEPH DONOFRIO

FOR THE COURT

Judges O'Neill and Donofrio,  
Seventh District;  
Judge Victor, Ninth District;  
BY ASSIGNMENT TO ELEVENTH DISTRICT.

STATE OF OHIO, LAKE COUNTY  
IN THE COURT OF APPEALS  
ELEVENTH DISTRICT

FILED  
COURT OF APPEALS

OCT 18 1982

ANDY J. TOTIN  
CLERK OF COURT  
LAKE COUNTY, OHIO

ROBERT J. KONDRAT,

Plaintiff-Appellant,

Vs.

RICHARD MARTINET,

Defendant-Appellee.

OPINION.

CASE NO. 9-022

RECEIVED  
OCT 19 1982

APPEARANCES.

Robert J. Kondrat, Pro Se, 29121 Chardon Road, Willoughby Hills, Ohio 44092.

Abraham Cantor and Patrick T. Ryan, 36100 Euclid Avenue #330, Willoughby, Ohio 44094, for Defendant-Appellee.

Hon. Joseph E. O'Neill,

Hon. Joseph Donofrio,

Hon. William H. Victor, JJ.

Dated:

DONOFRIO, J.

Appeal from the Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio.

Plaintiff-appellant, Robert J. Kondrat, and plaintiff, John Szabo, filed a complaint against defendant-appellee, Richard Martinet, finance director of the city of Willoughby Hills, seeking an injunction to prevent the expenditure of municipal funds in the defense of a lawsuit filed against a Willoughby Hills councilman, Morton O'Ryan. The complaint alleged that the Willoughby Hills council had passed a resolution authorizing the expenditure of municipal funds for the defense of the lawsuit. The appellant alleged that because the underlying lawsuit was based on a claim of defamation, O'Ryan was, therefore, acting beyond the scope of his authority as a public official (complaint, paragraph (e)). Thus, the expenditure of municipal funds would be a misapplication of public monies (complaint, paragraph (h)).

On February 19, 1980, a letter from Szabo was submitted to the court in which he withdrew from the case.

On April 9, 1980, a combined request for admission, interrogatories and document request was served upon appellant Kondrat. No answer to the request for admission was filed with the court.

On September 22, 1980, appellee moved for summary judgment.

On October 22, 1980, appellant filed his "Reply to Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgment."

On September 9, 1981, the trial court granted defendant's motion for summary judgment.

On October 1, 1981, appellant filed a document styled "Notice of Appeal with Reason for Appeal." Attached to the document was an additional page captioned "Assignment of Error or Reason for Appeal." Appellant suggests that he had been denied his constitutional rights because:

"\* \* \* The Defendant's use of Plaintiff's tax monies against Plaintiff is akin to compelling the Plaintiff to be a witness against himself."

In the appellant's statement of the case portion of his brief, he further argues that the decision of the trial court violated the appellant's rights guaranteed by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U. S. Constitution, and that the appellant has been deprived of due process of law and equal protection of the laws.

In that portion of his brief under "Argument," appellant argues and we quote:

"The Appellant's Complaint, filed in the lower court, was to prevent the misapplication of public funds by city officials, and to prevent the use of Appellant's tax dollars against the Appellant in litigation stemming from the Recall of officials of the City of Willoughby Hills. The city officials' conspiratorial scheme of fabricating criminal activity against the Appellant and others was laid bare in the case of State of Ohio vs. Kondrat, Case No. 76-CR-473,

in Lake County Common Pleas Court. See EXHIBIT 'A' attached hereto. The officials' admission to conspiring was laid bare in pleadings of the case of Kondrat vs. Schaefer, et al, Case No. 77 CIV 0918, Lake County Common Pleas Court. See EXHIBIT 'B' attached hereto.

"Public officials who conspire against citizens whom they are to represent is tyranny. Public funds which are used in litigation of these same officials that have committed oppressive acts, is a misapplication of public funds. And the use of Appellant's tax money against the Appellant deprives the Appellant of his constitutional rights.

"\* \* \* Without the knowhow, skill, cunningness, deceit, brethren relationship and other attributes, good and evil, which are a requisite of the judicial business, the Appellant cannot compete on the same level. This case and others have attested to this.

"The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution states in part that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. The Fourteenth Amendment further states in part that no person shall be denied equal protection of the laws. The lower court's decision has both deprived the Appellant due process of law and the equal protection of the laws. Due process of law and equal protection of the laws cannot be realized by a judicial decision that is unreasonable and arbitrary, and one that does not provide for the equal protection and security of the Appellant. The lower court's decision has permitted the Appellant's own tax money to be brought to bear against the Appellant."

Other than the bare allegation as stated above, appellant does not demonstrate by the record where the trial court erred to his prejudice.

Appellant requested an injunction against the finance director of the city of Willoughby Hills from expending munic-

ipal funds in the defense of a lawsuit which he had filed against a Willoughby Hills councilman. The underlying lawsuit alleged that the Willoughby Hills councilman had defamed the appellant during the course of a council meeting.

In appellant's assignment of error he does not argue the issue that was before the lower court, but instead suggests that the use of tax monies as suggested by a Willoughby Hills councilmatic resolution is akin to compelling the appellant to be a witness against himself.

The Ohio Supreme Court has determined that an appellant may not bring a new theory for consideration to a reviewing court:

The court has consistently taken the position that issues not presented to the trial court may not be raised on appeal. *Kalish v. Trans World Airlines* (1977), 59 Ohio St. 2d 73.

The trial court in its judgment entry found that:

"The Court finds that by reason of the admissions deemed to have been made during the discovery process in this case and considering the arguments of counsel and Mr. Kondrat, that the motion for summary judgment ought to be and hereby is granted."

Ohio law is clear that the case presented before the reviewing court must be upon the same theory as that upon which it was tried. 5 Ohio Jurisprudence 3d 68, Appellate Review, Section 516.



Appellant did not file affidavits or other documents in opposition to the summary judgment. The failure to respond to request for admission as found by the trial court is critical to the appellant's case in the trial court.

The appellee propounded requests for admission to appellant pursuant to Civil Rule 36. The appellant failed to answer and, therefore, the requests for admission must be deemed admitted for the purposes of the case at bar pursuant to Civil Rule 36(B). *St. Paul Fire & Marine Ins. Co. v. Battle* (1975), 44 Ohio App. 2d 261. The unanswered requests for admission include:

"4) REQUEST FOR ADMISSION - Morton O'Ryan, at all times relevant within the Complaint in Case No. 79-CIV-0087, was a duly elected, qualified and acting councilman of the City of Willoughby Hills, Ohio.

"\* \* \*

"7) REQUEST FOR ADMISSION - Morton O'Ryan did not refer to you by name in the remarks attributed to Defendant in Paragraph 1 of the Complaint in Case No. 79-CIV-0087.

"\* \* \*

"10) REQUEST FOR ADMISSION - The statements attributed to Defendant as alleged in Paragraph 1 of your Complaint in Case No. 79-CIV-0087 occurred during a Willoughby Hills, Ohio council meeting while City council members, including the Defendant, were discussing Willoughby Hills resolution 1978-9, 'A RESOLUTION COMMENDING GEORGE EDGAR FOR SERVICE TO WILLOUGHBY HILLS'."

"\* \* \*



"14) REQUEST FOR ADMISSION - The remarks of the Morton O'Ryan as alleged in Paragraph 1 of your Complaint in Case No. 79-CIV-0087 were made during the course of a Willoughby Hills council meeting and relative to the then pending Willoughby Hills Resolution No. 1978-9.

"\* \* \*

"39) REQUEST FOR ADMISSION - At all times relevant in the Complaint referred to as Exhibit 'A' attached to Plaintiff's Complaint in Case No. 79-CIV-0932, Morton O'Ryan was acting within the scope of his duties as a Willoughby Hills councilman."

In the case of St. Paul Fire & Marine Ins. Co. v. Battle (1975), 44 Ohio App. 2d 261, the syllabus states:

- "2. The purpose of Civil Rule 36, Requests for Admission, is to provide a mechanism by which potentially disputed issues may be expeditiously resolved before trial, thereby expediting proof of these issues at trial.
- "3. Civil Rule 36 requires that when requests for admission are filed by a party, the opposing party must timely respond in appropriate fashion either by objection or answer.
  - a. Failure to timely respond to requests for admission by either objection or answer will result in admissions against the 'non-responding' party."

A reading of the trial court's judgment entry and a perusal of the record indicate that the trial court was correct in its ruling. The conduct of Councilman O'Ryan has been established to be within the scope of his councilmatic duties as a result of the discovery and the affidavit of O'Ryan, Exhibit B, which was attached to the motion for summary judgment. Appellant's request for an injunction to restrain the finance director from expending funds is answered in the syllabus.

of State, ex rel. Flagg, v. City of Bedford (1966), 7 Ohio St. 2d 45, which provides:

"A municipal corporation will not be enjoined from expending funds as and for a public purpose in authorizing additional compensation for the defense of its mayor in a libel action brought as a result of the publication of unprivileged statements by the mayor concerning the conduct of municipal business by the director of law of the municipal corporation, where it does not appear as a matter of law that the mayor's statements were beyond the scope of his employment."

At Costanzo v. Gaul (1980), 62 Ohio St. 2d 106 at 110, we find:

"Other cases have extended the absolute privilege to members of governing bodies of political subdivisions, if the defamatory matter was published during the course of the official proceedings of the body, and if the matter as published was within the scope of that body's authority, and the statements or utterances are pertinent to the subject under consideration, discussion or debate of the legislative body. See, e.g., Wachsmuth v. Merchants' Nat. Bank (1893), 96 Mich. 426, 56 N.W. 9; Scott v. McDonnell Douglas Corp. (1974), 37 Cal. App. 3d 277, 112 Cal. Rptr. 609; Jacobs v. Underwood (Ky, 1972), 484 S.W. 2d 855.

"An example of the latter position is set forth in the case of Tanner v. Gault (1925), 29 Ohio App. 243, concerning the defamatory statement of county commissioners relative to official acts of the county surveyor. The court held that the utterances were absolutely privileged on the ground that it was pertinent for the commissioners to state their reasons for enacting a particular regulation regarding materials for a county road.

"We believe that the rule of absolute privilege may reasonably be applied to utterances made during the course of official proceedings by members of local governing bodies, at least where the statements relate to a matter under consideration, discussion or debate."

For the foregoing reasons we overrule appellant's assignment of error and accordingly affirm the judgment of the trial court.

Judgment affirmed.

O'Neill, P. J., of the  
Seventh Appellate District,  
concur;  
Victor, J., of the Ninth  
Appellate District, concurs;  
Sitting by Assignment.

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JUDGE, OF THE SEVENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT,  
SITTING BY ASSIGNMENT.

# THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

THE STATE OF OHIO, }

City of Columbus. }

Bert J. Kondrat,

Appellant,

vs.

Richard Martinet,

Appellee

19<sup>83</sup> TERM

To wit: January 26, 1983

No. 82-1655

MOTION FOR AN ORDER DIRECTING  
THE COURT OF APPEALS

for LAKE County

TO CERTIFY ITS RECORD

It is ordered by the Court that this motion is overruled.

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JAN 27 1983

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INFORMATION  
ONLY  
NOT FOR FILING

## COSTS:

Motion Fee, \$20.00, paid by \_\_\_\_\_

James Wm. Kelly

I, ~~Rhomas L. Starks~~, Clerk of the Supreme Court of Ohio, certify that the foregoing entry was correctly copied from the Journal of this Court.

Witness my hand and the seal of the Court

this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO  
EASTERN DIVISION

FILED  
1982 OCT -1 PM 3:13  
CLERK U.S. DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO  
CIVIL DIVISION

JOANNE MACKO, et al

Plaintiffs

v.

BARRY M. BYRON, et al

Defendants

Case No. C77-1158

MEMORANDUM and ORDER

GREEN, S. J.:

In this civil rights action, plaintiffs Joanne Macko, Helen Merteneit, and John Szabo seek damages from the City of Willoughby Hills and numerous city officials. Plaintiffs claim they were unjustly charged with criminal offenses as punishment for their exercise of First Amendment rights.

Defendants in the action are the City, Mayor Melvin G. Schaefer, Clerk Marilyn Monzula, Law Director Barry M. Byron, and present or former Councilmen Sabby J. DeFrank, Robert Moorehead, Morton O'Ryan, Lawrence O'Donnell, and George Kraincic.

All defendants have moved for dismissal of the action or for summary judgment. Numerous issues are raised. Plaintiffs have filed briefs opposing the motions. Reply and cross-reply briefs have been filed, and a supplementary motion for summary judgment was filed and briefed. The volume of paper generated by these motions exceeds six inches in depth.

This Court has jurisdiction to hear and decide this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1343 and 42 U.S.C. §1983.

At the outset, it must be noted that summary judgment is proper only where it appears from the record that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and that the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. Rule 56(c), Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Further, when considering a motion for summary judgment, the Court must construe all facts and inferences drawn from the facts in a light most favorable to the non-moving party, in this case the plaintiffs. Adickes v. Kress & Co., 398 U.S. 147 (1979); Smith v. Hudson, 600 F. 2d 60 (C.A. 6, 1979).

#### A. FACTS

Viewed in that light, it appears the record<sup>1/</sup> thus presents the following framework of material facts. Detailed factual matters will be found where they apply in the remainder of this memorandum.

At all times relevant to this action, plaintiffs were residents of Willoughby Hills, a suburb of Cleveland. In August 1976, plaintiffs, other citizens, and two city councilmen began a campaign to recall from office the mayor and the five other councilmen. Petitions toward that end were circulated, and numerous signatures were secured.

Believing the petitions to be valid in form and the signatures to be sufficient in number, plaintiffs filed

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1/ Before deciding this motion, the Court carefully reviewed the entire record in this lawsuit, including material filed prior to the proceedings in the Court of Appeals. For support of specific factual findings, the Court found most helpful the answers of all parties to interrogatories propounded by their respective opponents, and the deposition testimony of defendants Monzula and Byron. Defendants had initially objected to consideration of the deposition testimony, but by letter dated August 19, 1982, the objection was withdrawn.



them with the defendant Clerk on September 2, 1976. On September 13, relying on a number of grounds, the Clerk informed plaintiffs that the petitions were defective.

Plaintiffs then initiated a mandamus action in the Ohio Supreme Court, seeking to have the recall issue placed on the November 1976 ballot. In a brief opinion, State ex rel. Macko v. Monzula, 48 Ohio St. 2d 35 (1976), the Ohio Supreme Court held that the form of the circulator's affidavit on the petitions was defective, and the recall issue never reached the voters.

On December 15, 1976, the Lake County Grand Jury indicted plaintiffs for various offenses related to the recall campaign. They were thereafter arrested, jailed, and required to post bond to secure their release.

Mrs. Macko was charged, in a five-count indictment, with one felony count of making a false statement in her circulator's affidavit. Apparently, it was that an individual who signed a petition she circulated was not a registered voter at the time he signed. The remaining four misdemeanor counts in the indictment related to signatures of non-registered signers.

Mrs. Merteneit was charged, in a one-count indictment, with signing the petitions twice.

Mr. Szabo was charged with three misdemeanor counts alleging that he miscounted the number of signatures on three of the petitions which he had circulated, and thus had entered the wrong number in his circulator's affidavit.<sup>2/</sup> He was also

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2/ The circulator's affidavit, which formed the basis for some of the charges against both Mr. Szabo and Mrs. Macko, was found to be defective by the Ohio Supreme Court. The Supreme Court's ruling on the issue predated the indictments by at least one month.



charged with four felony counts of perjuring himself during a deposition taken in the mandamus proceedings before the Ohio Supreme Court. The precise nature of the alleged perjury is not clear from the record, but apparently had to do with the fact that the middle initial in his signature on some of the petitions appeared to have been written with a different pen than the rest of his signature.

At the time the plaintiffs were indicted, city officials knew of other individuals who were not involved in the recall campaign and who had committed acts similar to those allegedly committed by the plaintiffs herein. Such other individuals were not, however, charged with any criminal offense.

At the end of 1976, or approximately two weeks after plaintiffs were arrested, the county prosecuting attorney who had obtained the indictments completed his term and left office. The newly elected prosecutor declined to continue the prosecution, and all of the charges against the plaintiffs were eventually dismissed.<sup>3/</sup>

This action was initiated against all defendants except the City on November 4, 1977. The City was named a

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3/ On January 12, 1977, less than two weeks after he had assumed office, the incoming prosecutor entered a nolle prosequi in the case against Mr. Szabo.

A nolle prosequi was entered in the case against Mrs. Merteneit on March 4, 1977.

The incoming prosecutor took no action in the case against Mrs. Macko, and her attorneys moved for dismissal of the indictments for failure of the prosecutor and the courts to bring the case to trial within the time limits set by §§2945.71-.73, Ohio Revised Code. The prosecutor did not oppose the motion, and by order dated July 14, 1977, the indictments against Mrs. Macko were dismissed.

new party defendant when the second amended complaint was filed on May 21, 1981.

As originally brought, this action named as additional defendants Paul H. Mitrovich, the prosecuting attorney who obtained the indictments, and Stephen J. Futterer, the assistant prosecutor who handled the cases under both Mitrovich and his successor in office. The original complaint also alleged a cause of action founded in 42 U.S.C. §1985.

By order dated April 9, 1979, this Court entered summary judgment in favor of defendants and dismissed the complaint. Plaintiffs appealed that order, and on February 19, 1981, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed in part and vacated in part, 641 F.2d 447, in light of intervening United States Supreme Court authority.

#### B. THE FIRST COUNT OF THE COMPLAINT

The first count of the second amended complaint repeats a claim dismissed from the first complaint. It alleges that defendant Monzula unlawfully denied plaintiffs their First Amendment right to vote on the recall matter. Defendant Monzula has moved for summary judgment in her favor on this count, claiming that the decision of the Ohio Supreme Court in the mandamus action is res judicata to the claim. The Court agrees.

The first count of the second amended complaint is essentially the same claim against Monzula which this Court dismissed in 1979 on the res judicata grounds reargued here. That dismissal was affirmed by the Court of Appeals in its

1981 decision. No appeal was taken of the Court of Appeals' judgment, and it has become final.

Therefore, the first count of the second amended complaint is barred, not only by the doctrine of res judicata, but also by the law of this case. Defendant Monzula is entitled to judgment in her favor as a matter of law, and judgment is hereby entered dismissing the first count of the second amended complaint.

C. THE SECOND COUNT OF THE COMPLAINT

The second count of the second amended complaint alleges that all defendants conspired to punish plaintiffs for the exercise of their First Amendment rights, and that as a result, plaintiffs were unlawfully charged with criminal offenses. The defendants have advanced a number of legal theories in their motion to dismiss or for summary judgment. These theories will be dealt with seriatim.

1. Motion to Dismiss the City  
of Willoughby Hills

The defendant City of Willoughby Hills moves for summary judgment on the second count, asserting that the claim against it is barred by the statute of limitations. In opposition, plaintiffs question the appropriate limitations period to apply in this case.

There is no federally mandated statute of limitations for general civil rights actions brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983. Federal courts thus apply the statute of limitations for the most comparable state law cause of action. Board of Regents v. Tomiano, 446 U.S. 478 (1980); Wright v.

Tennessee, 628 F. 2d 949 (C.A. 6, 1980); Warner v. Perrino, 585 F. 2d 171 (C.A. 6, 1978). The statute of limitations for §1983 actions alleging constitutionally-impermissible prosecutions is the one-year period set by §2305.11(A), Ohio Revised Code, for certain torts, including malicious prosecution. Kilgore v. Mansfield, 639 F. 2d 632 (C.A. 6, 1982).

Since the plaintiffs' claims against the City were filed on May 21, 1981, substantially in excess of one year after the indictments against them were dismissed (see note 3, supra), their claims against the City are barred by time. The City's motion for summary judgment is therefore granted, and the complaint against the City is dismissed.

2. Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Specificity

The remaining individual defendants move to dismiss the entire complaint against them, claiming that it fails to state with sufficient specificity the factual basis for the civil rights claim.

The specific language at issue is contained in paragraphs 14 and 18 of the second amended complaint which read:

14. Each defendant acting under color of law and in active concert with all other defendants and pursuant to the city's policies and procedures did conspire to deprive and did deprive plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws by maliciously, knowingly, and unlawfully giving incomplete and false information and preventing information to be provided to the grand jury and causing an indictment to be issued against plaintiffs by giving and not giving this information to the prosecuting attorney for Lake County

and subsequently this directly caused secret indictments to be issued charging perjury and various violations of the Ohio laws relating to petitions.

18. Defendant's actions were perpetrated against plaintiffs to discourage plaintiffs from initiating a second recall drive and were also intended as punishment for plaintiffs having initiated their first recall effort, all in violation of their rights as provided under the Constitution.

Defendants correctly cite authority to the effect that "a pleading is insufficient to state a cause of action under the Civil Rights Act if [its] allegations are merely conclusory," Smith v. Terrion, 636 F. 2d 1219 (C.A. 6, 1980).<sup>4</sup> "[S]ome particularized facts demonstrating a constitutional deprivation are required to sustain a cause of action." Ibid.

An examination of the challenged language shows that while they perhaps are not as artfully drafted as they might have been, paragraphs 14 and 18 of the second amended complaint meet the specificity requirements for civil rights pleading. There are specific allegations that the individual defendants conspired to deprive plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws, and acted to provide false and incomplete information to the county prosecutor which resulted in indictments. Paragraph 18 alleges specifically that such a course was followed to punish plaintiffs for the exercise of protected First Amendment freedoms.

Such language satisfies the general pleading requirement that a defendant be put on notice of the conduct

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4/ Although the text of the Court's opinion is not published in the Federal Reporter 2d, it is available in LEXIS, GENFED Library, CIR File.

alleged to give rise to liability. Such language also fairly meets the commands of Civ. R. 8(a), which requires "a short and plain statement" of the allegations in the complaint. Such language also satisfies the requirement that "some particularized facts" be stated in support of the claim of violation of civil rights.<sup>5/</sup> Cf., Glasson v. Louisville, 518 F. 2d 899 (C.A. 6, 1975).

To require more would be to require civil rights plaintiffs to set forth their entire factual case in the complaint. In addition to being unduly burdensome, such a rule would effectively eliminate the role of discovery in civil rights cases.

The motion to dismiss the complaint for failure to state a claim with sufficient specificity is, therefore, denied.

3. Motion for Summary Judgment  
on Merits of Claim

Defendants next move for summary judgment as to the merits of the civil rights count. In summary, defendants assert (a) that none of the defendants except Byron and Monzula was involved in presenting evidence either to the prosecutor or the Grand Jury; (b) that none of the defendants discussed between themselves the matter of testimony before the Grand Jury prior to issuance of the indictments;

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5/ Defendants can claim no prejudice from any lack of specificity, particularly at this late date. Extensive discovery has already been accomplished, and via their answers to defendant's interrogatories, plaintiffs have made plain the specific acts which are said to have been the result of a conspiracy between the defendants. Plaintiffs have also, by affidavit, averred specifically that the conspiracy commenced on or about September 4, 1976, the date that the defendants allegedly met at the Willoughby Hills City Hall. Thus, there are specific factual assertions in the five-year-old record in this case which would cure any defect in the pleadings.

(c) that the indictments are prima facie proof of probable cause, and that this action is therefore barred. Each claim is supported by affidavits and documentation. Plaintiffs, who have alleged collective liability based upon a conspiracy rather than acts by individual defendants, have filed affidavits contesting some of the assertions made by defendants. Plaintiffs also rely upon answers to interrogatories and the deposition testimony of defendants Byron and Monzula.

The Court finds that while some of the assertions made by defendants might be sufficient to convince a jury to find in their favor, the record lacks the factual clarity required to support summary judgment.

a. Common Liability for Acts  
of Co-conspirators

As to their first claim, the affidavits of all individual defendants except Byron and Monzula assert that the defendant mayor and councilmen had no direct involvement in presenting evidence or testimony to the Grand Jury. Indeed, it appears from the affidavits that defendants Byron and Monzula were the only conduits of information from the City to either the prosecutor or the Grand Jury.

These assertions do not, however, refute the allegations and averments (a) that a conspiracy existed between all defendants, or (b) that individual councilmen and the mayor were involved in the conspiracy. The record does, in fact, contain evidence from which the converse could, and in the context of this motion for summary judgment, must be inferred. That evidence may be summarized as follows.

In their answers to defendants' interrogatories plaintiffs aver that shortly after the recall petitions were



filed, the defendants met to determine their course of action. In their answers to plaintiffs' interrogatories, defendants Kraincic, O'Donnell, O'Ryan and Moorehead state that at roughly that time, all defendants met to discuss whether their reaction to the recall campaign would be a joint one. The councilmen's answers to the interrogatories indicate that they and the mayor decided to fight the recall in a common effort. The councilmen state that defendant Byron advised them of their legal rights.

One of the steps which the mayor and councilmen took as a joint effort was to send a letter to each of the individuals who signed the petitions. The letter, dated September 3, 1976 and attached as an exhibit to the defendants' answers to plaintiffs' interrogatories, refutes each of the grounds alleged in the recall petitions. It then asks the signers to remove their signatures from the petitions.

Defendant Monzula testified at her deposition of October 5, 1976, that she typed the letter while at work in City Hall. At the bottom of the letter are the typed names, intended as signatures, of the defendant mayor and five councilmen.

Mrs. Monzula also testified that Byron, who was legal counsel to the mayor and five councilmen as a group, was the person she looked to for instructions. From her testimony, it is plain that Byron frequently gave Mrs. Monzula instructions on how to deal with the recall matter, and that Mrs. Monzula followed those instructions. Mrs. Monzula also testified that Byron was her personal attorney.

Thus, there is evidence in the record from which a jury could find that the defendants decided at an early date to work in concert to oppose the recall campaign. There is also evidence from which a jury could find that at least one overt act occurred in furtherance of the common goal.

There is also evidence in the record from which a jury could find that the defendants sought, and eventually achieved, the issuance of criminal charges against plaintiffs.

Plaintiffs have averred in answers to defendants' interrogatories that defendant Schaefer, in the presence of all other defendants at a City Council meeting, and without objection from any of them, publicly threatened criminal or civil proceedings against anyone who participated in the recall effort. Similar statements are made in plaintiffs' affidavits.

The effort to secure criminal sanctions against the plaintiffs apparently began soon after the petitions were filed. On September 15, 1976, about two weeks after the petitions were filed, Byron was quoted in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, a daily newspaper, as stating he would announce later that day whether he would prosecute certain individuals who had signed the petitions. In his deposition, taken January 30, 1980, Byron was given the opportunity to, but did not, deny making the statement to the Plain Dealer reporter.

The same day, September 15, Byron wrote a letter to then Ohio Secretary of State Ted W. Brown. A copy of the letter, signed by Byron in his capacity as city law director, is attached as an exhibit to defendants' motion for summary judgment. The letter contains six specific allegations of

violations of election laws which, Byron wrote, were "uncovered" by "city officials." Byron testified at his deposition that the "city officials" referred to in the letter were the defendant mayor, councilmen, and clerk, all of whom assisted him in the investigation. Byron's letter asked Secretary of State Brown to investigate the charges further, and to prosecute the "guilty parties involved."

At his deposition, Byron testified that the "guilty parties" he wanted Brown to prosecute included plaintiffs Macko, Szabo, and Merteneit.

Byron testified that on September 23, 1976, he provided a copy of the letter to Monzula to read publicly at that evening's city council meeting. Mrs. Monzula did so in the presence of all defendants, and without objection from any of them. Substantial public uproar followed.

Secretary of State Brown eventually replied to Byron that he would decline to investigate or prosecute the allegations contained in the September 15 letter or to prosecute any individual. Byron testified that he then brought the matter to the attention of County Prosecutor Mitrovich. Byron testified that he met with Mitrovich twice and provided the prosecutor with selected petitions and with selected portions of the depositions taken during the mandamus action in the Ohio Supreme Court. Mrs. Monzula subsequently testified before the Lake County Grand Jury, and the indictments followed.

It is the fundamental law of conspiracy or joint venture that a conspiracy is an agreement among two or more parties to achieve a result, plus an overt act by at least

one conspirator to that end. Where either the intended result or any of the methods used are illegal, from the time of the first overt act all non-immune co-conspirators are liable for the acts of any co-conspirator. Dennis v. Sparks, 449 U.S. 24 (1980); Griffin v. Breckinridge, 403 U.S. 88 at 103 (1971); Cameron v. Brock, 473 F. 2d 608 (C.A. 6, 1973); Saier v. State Bar of Michigan, 293 F. 2d 756, 761 (C.A. 6, 1961). See, also, Bruner v. Dunaway, 684 F. 2d 422, 426 (C.A. 6, 1982); Smith v. Ross, 482 F. 2d 33, 36-37 (C.A. 6, 1973); Edmonds v. Dillin, 485 F. Supp. 722, 726-27 (N.D. Ohio, 1980).

Thus, even though the mayor and five councilmen may not have been personally involved in the initiation of charges against plaintiffs, it does not follow that they are not liable. There is evidence in the record from which a jury could find that all defendants decided to fight the recall as a joint effort, and that the initiation of criminal charges was one of the methods used in that effort. It therefore follows that all defendants might be liable in the event that any act in furtherance of their common goal violated plaintiffs' First Amendment rights to petition the government and seek removal of public officials by peaceful means. Glasson v. Louisville, supra; Cameron v. Brock, supra.

b. First Amendment Rights

We now examine that facet of this case. Defendants assert that the issuance of indictments by the Grand Jury constitute prima facie evidence of probable cause, and that therefore no action in malicious prosecution can exist.

If this was a malicious prosecution case, such an assertion would be correct and dispositive of this lawsuit. But this is not a malicious prosecution case. This is a discriminatory prosecution action, in which plaintiffs claim they were prosecuted as punishment for the exercise of First Amendment freedoms.

To establish such a claim, plaintiffs must prove (1) that others similarly situated generally have not been prosecuted for conduct similar to that for which they were prosecuted, and (2) that their "selection for prosecution was based on an impermissible ground such as race, religion, or the exercise of First Amendment rights." Oyler v. Boles, 368 U.S. 448, 456 (1962); Cameron v. Brock, *supra*; United States v. Germain, 411 F. Supp. 719 (S.D. Ohio, 1975). In discriminatory prosecution actions the questions of probable cause, guilt, or innocence are not relevant.<sup>6/</sup>

The question of discriminatory prosecution related not to the guilt or innocence of appellants, but rather addresses itself to a constitutional defect in the institution of the prosecution. United States v. Berrigan, 482 F. 2d 171, 175 (C.A. 3, 1973).

See, also, United States v. Falk, 479 F. 2d 619, 620, n. 5 (C.A. 7, En Banc, 1973); United States v. Steele,

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6/ Discriminatory prosecution actions are founded in the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the fundamental right which forms the basis for such actions is the right to be free of irrational or impermissible classifications. Malicious prosecution actions are founded in the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the right which forms the basis for such actions is the right to be free of prosecution unless there is some factual basis for that prosecution. Since entirely different rights are at stake in the two types of actions, the elements of each action are different.

461 F. 2d 1148 (C.A. 9, 1972); United States v. Crowthers, 456 F. 2d 1074, 1080 (C.A. 4, 1972); Moss v. Horning, 314 F. 2d 89, 92-93 (C.A. 2, 1963); cf. Yick Wo v. Hopkins, 118 U.S. 356, 373-74 (1886).

There is evidence in the record from which a jury could find in favor of plaintiffs on both elements of the cause of action. First, there is evidence that other individuals, situated similarly as plaintiffs, were not prosecuted. In his deposition, Byron testified that he was aware as early as September 15, 1976, that several individuals had signed the petitions more than once. These individuals included plaintiff Merteneit, a Mrs. Yaeger, and, apparently, a John N. Howlett. Only Mrs. Merteneit was indicted for that offense.

Second, there is evidence from which a jury could infer that the selection of plaintiffs was based on their active involvement in the recall campaign. For example, of Mrs. Merteneit, Mrs. Yaeger, and Mr. Howlett, only Mrs. Merteneit was actively involved in the campaign. And as noted, only Mrs. Merteneit was indicted. Further, Mrs. Monzula testified at her deposition that numerous signatures on the petitions were declared invalid because the individuals who signed were not registered voters, and others were declared invalid because the signers had signed more than once. Both categories of individuals might have been liable for prosecution for violation of §3599.13, Ohio Revised Code, but large numbers of indictments were not issued. And both Byron and Monzula testified that Mrs. Yaeger had admitted to Mayor Schaefer that she forged her husband's signature on the petitions. She was not indicted.



The record shows that the only individuals who were indicted were those who were actively involved in the recall campaign. From these facts, a jury could conclude that the plaintiffs in this case were unlawfully prosecuted; that they were selected for prosecution as punishment for their exercise of First Amendment rights. A jury could, of course, conclude otherwise, but because a determination might be made in plaintiffs' favor, defendants' motion for summary judgment on the merits of this case must be, and it is, denied.

4. Motion for Summary Judgment  
on Ground of Collateral Estoppel

Defendant next move for summary judgment based on the doctrine of collateral estoppel. They claim there was certain concurrent litigation between the parties, a libel action in the Lake County Common Pleas Court. The defamation action and this lawsuit were filed at approximately the same time, but because of the proceedings in the Court of Appeals in this case, the libel action reached trial first.

In the libel action, all plaintiffs herein sought damages from all defendants herein because of the publication of defendant Byron's September 15 letter to Secretary of State Brown. The defendant mayor, councilmen, and clerk were dismissed from the lawsuit prior to trial, and at the close of plaintiffs' evidence the state trial judge directed a verdict in Byron's favor.

A transcript of the state judge's ruling from the bench in Byron's favor is attached to defendants' motion for summary judgment. In his ruling, dated February 14, 1980, the judge concluded that the contents of the September 15 letter was not defamatory as a matter of law; that numerous privileges allowed Byron to make the statements therein without exposing himself to liability; and that the statements were true. Equating such a holding as equal to a criminal conviction,

or at the very least to a judicial finding of probable cause, defendants assert that plaintiffs are estopped from now claiming lack of probable cause, and that this malicious prosecution action must fail.

This argument is both incorrect and wide of the mark. As noted, probable cause or the lack of it is not relevant in a discriminatory prosecution action. Further, because numerous grounds were cited by the state trial judge, it is not clear whether his finding of truth was a necessary and essential part of the judgment. Hardy v. Johns-Manville Sales Corp., 681 F. 2d 334, 341 (C.A. 6, 1982). The motion for summary judgment based on the doctrine of collateral estoppel is denied.

5. Motion for Summary Judgment on  
Ground of Res Judicata

Defendants' final claim is contained in a supplemental motion for summary judgment filed with leave of court on May 17, 1982. In the supplemental motion, defendants assert that plaintiffs' claims in this action are barred by the doctrine of res judicata, in that the civil rights claim asserted here was not litigated in the state court defamation action. Defendants assert that since the civil rights claims could have been litigated in the prior action, res judicata bars such claims here.

In opposition, plaintiffs allege they were unable to assert their civil rights claim in the state action, and therefore should not be prevented from doing so in this court.

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has consistently applied the doctrine of res judicata in civil rights cases.

E.g., Silcox v. United Trucking Service, Inc., \_\_\_\_ F. 2d \_\_\_\_, No. 81-5033, decision of September 2, 1982; Castorr v. Brundage, 674 F. 2d 531 (C.A. 6, 1982); Cemer v. Marathon Oil Co., 583 F. 2d 830 (C.A. 6, 1978); Coogan v. Cincinnati Bar Association, 431 F. 2d 1209 (C.A. 6, 1970).<sup>7/</sup> The doctrine of res judicata does not, however, bar the civil rights claim asserted in this action.

a. Identity of Claims

As the Court of Appeals noted in Silcox, supra,  
slip op. at 8:

In Cemer, supra, we held that a final decision on a plaintiff's age discrimination suit was res judicata as to his subsequent breach of contract action, where both suits sought to remedy the same wrong. . . .  
[W]here two successive suits seeks recovery for the same injury, a judgment on the merits operates as a bar to the later suit, even though a different theory of recovery is advanced in the second suit.

It appears that the claim which was litigated in the state courts is not the claim which is the subject of this lawsuit. In the state trial, plaintiffs asserted that they were defamed by publication of Byron's letter of September 15, 1976. In this action, they claim that their indictment in December of that year violated their First and Fourteenth Amendment rights. While the two claims are somewhat factually interrelated, the rights alleged to have been injured are distinct.<sup>8/</sup> The time of injury differed by more than three months, and the proof required of plaintiffs for

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7/ There is a special exception to the doctrine of res judicata in civil rights cases, where application of a state court judgment to bar a federal claim would fly "in the face of more important federal policies. . . ." Castorr, at 674 F. 2d 536.

8/ The Constitution does not protect an individual's reputation from defamation. Paul v. Davis, 424 U.S. 693 (1976). The Constitution does, however, guarantee the freedom of political speech and activity, and the equal protection of the laws.

each claim is not the same. Silcox, supra; Cemer, supra, at 583 F. 2d 832, Francis H. Allen, Inc. v. Midwestco Enterprises, Inc., 477 F. Supp. 169, 172-73 (S.D. Ohio, 1979). Since the claims are different, res judicata does not bar this action. Ibid., and see 1B Moore's Federal Practice, ¶0.410[1], n. 10, and authority cited therein.

b. Joinder of Claims

Defendants do not, however, base their res judicata assertions wholly on the basis that the same claim is involved. Instead, they allege that the doctrine bars all claims which plaintiffs could have asserted in the state court action, including the civil rights claim asserted here. There are three reasons why this allegation lacks merit. First, defendants misstate the doctrine. Second, they ignore one of its major exceptions. Third, they assume a crucial fact which is in serious dispute.

The generally accepted black-letter rule of res judicata, 1B Moore's Federal Practice, ¶0.410, was set forth in Cromwell v. County of Sac, 94 U.S. 351 (1877):

As to the same cause of action, [a final judgment on the merits by a court of competent jurisdiction] constitutes an absolute bar to a subsequent [lawsuit]. It is a finality as to the claim or demand in controversy, . . . not only as to every matter offered and received to sustain or defeat the claim or demand, but as to any other admissible matter which might have been offered for that purpose. (Emphasis added).

The doctrine of res judicata thus does not impose upon plaintiffs a rule requiring the mandatory joinder of claims. The doctrine merely calls upon a party to present all of his proof and assert all of his theories of recovery

or defense when litigating any claim, as he will be prevented from doing so thereafter. Harrington v. Vandalia-Butler Board of Education, 649 F. 2d 434 (C.A. 6, 1981); Cemer, supra. The doctrine does not, as defendants assert, require a plaintiff to join into one action all of the separate causes of action which he may have against a particular defendant. See, 1B Moore's Federal Practice, ¶0.410[2], and the extensive authority cited therein.

Second, even if the doctrine did require plaintiffs to consolidate their claims into one lawsuit, there is an exception to the rule which plainly applies under the facts of this case. The doctrine of res judicata has a corollary rule prohibiting the splitting of claims, i.e., seeking in separate lawsuits to remedy different aspects of the same injury. Restatement, Judgments, §62. If a claim is split, a defending party may, by proper objection, require consolidation of all the actions into one lawsuit. But comment (m) to §62 makes plain that:

Where plaintiff brings separate actions based upon different items included in his claim, and in none of the actions does the defendant make the objection that another action is pending based upon the same claim, a judgment . . . in one of the actions does not preclude [plaintiff] from obtaining judgment in the other actions. In such case the failure of the defendant to object to the splitting of plaintiff's claim is effective as a consent to the splitting of the claim.

See, also, Weekes v. Atlantic International Insurance Co., 370 F. 2d 264 (C.A. 9, 1966).

Thus, defendants have waited too long to insist that the entire dispute between the parties be decided in

one lawsuit. Having consented by inaction to separate trials of the defamation and civil rights issues, defendants cannot now assert a victory in the state courts as a technical bar to the federal claim.

And third, defendants assume that plaintiffs could have asserted their civil rights claim in the state action. They cite Jackson v. Kurtz, 65 Ohio App. 2d 152 (Hamilton Co., 1979), and two unreported decisions.<sup>9/</sup> as holding that the courts of Ohio have jurisdiction over §1983 claims. There appears, however, to be substantial dispute within Ohio's judicial system as to whether the state courts will accept jurisdiction over federal civil rights claims.

In Wheeler v. General Motors Corp., No. 5889, Court of Appeals for Montgomery County, decision of January 12, 1979, it was held that Ohio's courts have no jurisdiction to hear a claim arising pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1985. In its decision, the Court noted that the jurisdiction of the state's trial level courts is limited by Article IV, §§1, 4, of the Ohio Constitution to that established "by law," and held that the Ohio General Assembly was exclusively vested with authority to establish that "law." The Wheeler court specifically held that the federal Congress has no authority to expand upon the jurisdiction of the state courts. In subsequent unreported decisions,<sup>10/</sup> the Montgomery County

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9/ Bossong v. Cincinnati, No. C-800675, Court of Appeals for Hamilton County, decision of October 7, 1981, 55 Ohio State Bar Association Report, No. 4 (February 8, 1982), p. 277 (summary); Arps v. City of Defiance, No. 4-81-3, Court of Appeals for Defiance County, decision of July 13, 1981 (unverified).

10/ Shapiro v. Dayton, No. 7183, Court of Appeals for Montgomery County, decision of October 6, 1981; Johnson v. Dayton, No. 7184, Court of Appeals for Montgomery County, decision of



Court of Appeals has extended that rationale and holding to §1983 actions.

It does not appear that the Ohio Supreme Court has resolved this conflict between its appellate circuits; this Court is ill-equipped to make such a sensitive policy decision involving the operations of the state's judicial system, and will decline to do so. Judice v. Vail, 430 U.S. 327 (1979).

Plaintiffs' ability to have presented their civil rights claims in the previous state litigation is a fact which is crucial to the application of res judicata. There is a clear question as to that crucial fact at this juncture, and for that reason alone, summary judgment cannot issue.

In summary, the doctrine of res judicata does not apply in this case, as the same claim was not involved in the state court action and the doctrine does not require the joinder of claims. Even if res judicata applied, the facts bring this case well within an exception to the doctrine. And there is substantial dispute as to whether the civil rights claim could have been heard in the state courts in the first instance.

Therefore, the earlier state court finding in the defamation action does not present a bar to this lawsuit.

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(cont'd)

October 6, 1981; as to both see 55 Ohio State Bar Association Report No. 18 (May 3, 1982), pp. 720-21 (summary). See, also Weltchek v. City of Toledo, No. L-80-374, Court of Appeals for Lucas County, decision of July 2, 1981, 55 Ohio State Bar Association Report No. 6 (January 25, 1982), p. 176 (summary) in which an action alleging malicious prosecution was dismissed, and the dismissal was affirmed, on grounds of sovereign immunity. The affirmance on such grounds necessarily excludes the possibility of jurisdiction founded in §1983. And, c.f., Mossman v. Donahey, 46 Ohio St. 2d 1 at 18-20 (Wm. B. Brown, concurring) (1976).

Summary judgment on the issue of res judicata is denied.

D. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated herein, the first count of the second amended complaint is dismissed. The City of Willoughby Hills is dismissed as a party defendant. The motions by the individual defendants to dismiss the second count and for summary judgment thereon are denied.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

*Bm C. Green*

United States Senior District Judge

September 30, 1982

MAR 28 1983

ALEXANDER L. STEVAS,  
~~CLERK~~

No. 82-1411

# Supreme Court of the United States

October Term, 1982

ROBERT J. KONDRAT,  
*Petitioner,*

vs.

RICHARD MARTINET,  
*Respondent.*

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI  
To THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

## BRIEF IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

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## **QUESTIONS PRESENTED**

1. When a municipality expends public funds in defense of a public official, and Petitioner wishes to prevent the expenditure, is the Petitioner estopped from denying that the public official is acting within the scope of his official duties where, in a prior action involving the Petitioner, the court resolved the issue?

2. May the Petitioner raise issues on review which he did not raise in the trial court?

### III

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Questions Presented .....	I
Opinions Below .....	1
Jurisdictional Statement .....	1
Constitutional Provisions and Statutes Involved .....	2
Statement of the Case .....	2
Argument .....	3
1. Petitioner is estopped from denying that the public official in the underlying lawsuit of this taxpayer action was within the scope of his of- ficial duties, and therefore, the municipality may expend funds in the defense of the public of- ficial .....	3
2. An Argument may not be raised on review where it was not raised in the trial court .....	4
3. The only legitimate issue raised by petitioner is not characteristic of the reasons for which a review on writ of certiorari will be granted by this Court .....	6
Conclusion .....	6
Appendix:	
Opinion of the Court of Appeals of Lake County, Ohio (April 27, 1981) .....	A1
Judgment Entry of the Court of Common Pleas (September 10, 1980) .....	A8
Journal Entry of the Court of Appeals of Lake County, Ohio (April 27, 1981) .....	A10
Order of the Supreme Court of Ohio Overruling Motion to Certify Record (September 16, 1981) .....	A11
Order of the Supreme Court of Ohio Dismissing Appeal (September 16, 1981) .....	A12

#### IV

### TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

---

#### Cases

<i>Costanzo v. Gaul</i> , 62 Ohio St. 2d 106 (1980) .....	4
<i>Hicks v. De La Cruz</i> , 52 Ohio St. 2d 71 (1977) .....	4
<i>Kalish v. Trans World Airlines, Inc.</i> , 50 Ohio St. 2d 73 (1977) .....	5
<i>Republic Steel Corp. v. Board of Revision of Cuyahoga County</i> , 175 Ohio St. 179 (1963) .....	5
<i>State, ex rel. Flagg v. Bedford</i> , 7 Ohio St. 2d 45 (1966) ..	4
<i>Trautwein v. Sorgenfrei</i> , 58 Ohio St. 2d 493 (1979) ....	4

#### Rule

United States Supreme Court Rules, Rule 17(b) and (c) .....	6
----------------------------------------------------------------	---



**No. 82-1411**  
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**BRIEF IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION  
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**OPINIONS BELOW**

The Ohio Supreme Court in Case No. 82-1655 on January 26, 1983, overruled Petitioner's Motion for an order directing the Court of Appeals for Lake County, Ohio, to certify its record.

On October 18, 1982, the Eleventh District Court of Appeals of Ohio, in Case No. 9-022, affirmed the Summary Judgment granted by the Lake County Common Pleas Court on September 9, 1981 in Case No. 79-CIV-0932.

**JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT**

Petitioner filed a Petition for a Writ of Certiorari on February 22, 1983, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1254.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND STATUTES INVOLVED**

No constitutional issues were raised or argued by Petitioner in the courts below.

## **STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

In 1979, Petitioner filed *Kondrat, et al. v. O'Ryan*, No. 79-CIV-0087 (Lake Co. C.P. 1979), in which he and a co-plaintiff alleged that they were defamed as a result of remarks made by a Willoughby Hills councilman during the course of a council meeting. The trial court determined that the remarks were shielded by legislative privilege because the statements were made during the course of a Willoughby Hills city council meeting and were relevant to the subject matter under discussion. Subsequently that decision was affirmed in *Kondrat v. O'Ryan*, No. CA 8-107 (Lake Co. Ct. App. 1981), and a Motion to Certify the case for review was denied by the Ohio Supreme Court in No. 81-802 (1981).

Subsequent to that case, the same plaintiff filed this suit against Respondent, Finance Director for the City of Willoughby Hills, seeking an injunction to prevent the expenditure of municipal funds in defense of the councilman in the defamation lawsuit. Petitioner alleged that because the underlying lawsuit was based on a claim of defamation, the councilman was acting beyond the scope of his authority as a public official, and was therefore not entitled to a defense funded by public monies.

Respondent, Finance Director, moved for summary judgment, which motion was granted, and judgment was entered on September 9, 1981.

Petitioner appealed the judgment to the Lake County Court of Appeals on the theory that Petitioner had been denied a constitutional right because the use of Petitioner's tax monies against Petitioner was akin to compelling Petitioner to be a witness against himself.

On October 18, 1982, the Court of Appeals affirmed the summary judgment entered by the trial court.

Petitioner then appealed to the Ohio Supreme Court, which overruled Petitioner's Motion for an Order Directing the Court of Appeals to Certify its Record.

Respondent now files this Brief in Opposition to Petitioner's Petition for Writ of Certiorari.

### **ARGUMENT**

- 1. PETITIONER IS ESTOPPED FROM DENYING THAT THE PUBLIC OFFICIAL IN THE UNDERLYING LAWSUIT OF THIS TAXPAYER ACTION WAS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF HIS OFFICIAL DUTIES, AND THEREFORE, THE MUNICIPALITY MAY EXPEND FUNDS IN THE DEFENSE OF THE PUBLIC OFFICIAL.**

As a result of Petitioner's original defamation suit, it was determined that the alleged defamatory remarks were shielded by legislative privilege because the statements were made during the course of a city council meeting and the councilman was acting within the scope of his duties in discussing an issue before the city council.

After filing the defamation case, the same Plaintiffs then filed this suit seeking to prevent Respondent, the Finance Director of the City of Willoughby Hills, from expending public funds for attorney fees in defending the

councilman in the defamation case on the theory that the councilman was outside the scope of his official duties.

Under the doctrine of collateral estoppel, where an issue of fact or law is actually litigated and determined by a valid and final judgment, such determination being essential to that judgment, that determination is conclusive in a subsequent action between the parties, whether on the same or a different claim. *Hicks v. De La Cruz*, 52 Ohio St. 2d 71 (1977); *Trautwein v. Sorgenfrei*, 58 Ohio St. 2d 493 (1979). In the case at bar, the Plaintiff is attempting to relitigate the same issue of fact that was determinative in the earlier defamation suit. Therefore, Petitioner is estopped from raising the issue of whether the councilman was acting within the scope of his official capacity in the action to prevent expenditure of funds when that issue had already been decided against Petitioner in the defamation suit.

It is well settled in Ohio that municipal funds may be expended in the defense of a lawsuit against a public official when the public official is acting within the scope of his official capacity. *State, ex rel. Flagg v. Bedford*, 7 Ohio St. 2d 45 (1966); See also: *Costanzo v. Gaul*, 62 Ohio St. 2d 106 (1980). Thus, Respondent in the instant case may authorize the expenditure of funds for the defense of the councilman where it has been determined that the councilman was acting within the scope of his official capacity at the time of the remarks complained of.

## **2. AN ARGUMENT MAY NOT BE RAISED ON REVIEW WHERE IT WAS NOT RAISED IN THE TRIAL COURT.**

When Petitioner brought the original suit, he requested only an injunction against Respondent to prevent Respondent from expending municipal funds in the defense

of a lawsuit which Petitioner had filed against a councilman.

On appeal, Petitioner did not argue the merits of the issue he presented to the trial court. Instead, he theorized that the use of tax monies to defend a councilman was akin to compelling the Petitioner to be a witness against himself.

Petitioner now abandons that theory and instead claims that he has been denied due process of law and equal protection of the laws. Petitioner does not, however, offer to this Court a record to substantiate the claim or law which support his theory.

Petitioner is clearly precluded from raising issues on review that he failed to raise at the trial level.

Where an issue is not raised and tried in the lower court, it cannot be raised for the first time on review. *Republic Steel Corp. v. Board of Revision of Cuyahoga County*, 175 Ohio St. 179 (1963). Furthermore, a party, having elected to proceed under a state theory, may not, on appeal, espouse a federal theory not considered by the court below. *Kalish v. Trans World Airlines, Inc.*, 50 Ohio St. 2d 73 (1977).

When Petitioner brought his suit at the trial level, he sought an injunction under Ohio law pertaining to when a municipality could pay the defense costs of one of its public officials. On appeal and before this Court, Petitioner has raised radically different issues which were not considered, let alone adjudicated, in the trial court below. Therefore, Petitioner could not raise those issues in the state Court of Appeals, and he may not raise them now.

**3. THE ONLY LEGITIMATE ISSUE RAISED BY PETITIONER IS NOT CHARACTERISTIC OF THE REASONS FOR WHICH A REVIEW ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI WILL BE GRANTED BY THIS COURT.**

As stated *supra*, Petitioner is collaterally estopped from raising the issue of the scope of the councilman's duties. He is also precluded from raising issues that were not raised earlier and decided by the trial court. Therefore, Petitioner's only properly-raised issue is whether the Respondent acted properly in expending funds for the councilman's defense.

This issue is not so special and important that it warrants this Court's consideration. Under Rule 17 (b) and (c) of the Rules of the Supreme Court of the United States, the character of reasons for granting certiorari involve "special and important" situations in which federal issues are decided in such a way as to be in conflict with other federal or state provisions.

In the instant case, Petitioner has not raised any such issue. Therefore, this Court should deny Petitioner's Petition for Writ of Certiorari.

**CONCLUSION**

Respondent respectfully requests that this Honorable Court deny jurisdiction. The Petitioner is estopped from attempting to obtain yet another determination on the issue of whether the councilman was acting within the scope of his public office, and therefore, Respondent was correct in authorizing the expenditure of funds for the councilman's defense. Furthermore, Petitioner is pre-



cluded from raising issues not previously raised at the trial level. Finally, Petitioner has not raised any issue so important that this Court should hear it.

Respectfully submitted,

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**APPENDIX**

**OPINION OF THE COURT OF APPEALS OF  
LAKE COUNTY, OHIO**

(Filed April 27, 1981)

Case No. 8-107

**IN THE COURT OF APPEALS  
STATE OF OHIO, LAKE COUNTY  
ELEVENTH DISTRICT**

**ROBERT J. KONDRAT,**  
*Plaintiff-Appellant,*

vs.

**MORTON O'RYAN,**  
*Defendant-Appellee.*

**OPINION**

**DONOFRIO, J.**

Appeal from the Court of Common Pleas of Lake County, Ohio. This matter is before us on the briefs of the parties, oral hearing having been waived. Upon consideration of the briefs and review of the record herein, we find no error prejudicial to the plaintiff-appellant, Robert J. Kondrat, and sustain the judgment of the trial court for the following reasons.

Appellant sets forth only one assignment of error and that is in regards to the trial judge not ruling on appellant's motion for extension of time. This assignment of error apparently is directed to a second motion for extension of time that was filed. To clarify the facts of this

case we will begin with the proceedings developing early in the trial court.

The appellant and plaintiff, John Szabo, filed a pro se complaint on January 29, 1979 alleging that defendant-appellee, Morton O'Ryan, a Willoughby Hills councilman, defamed plaintiffs as a result of a statement made during the course of the Willoughby Hills council meeting.

The complaint, paragraph 1, provides:

"1. Now comes Plaintiffs ROBERT J. KONDRAT and JOHN L. SZABO, and for their Complaint state, allege and aver that on or about February 23, 1978, the Defendant, Morton O'Ryan, a Councilman in the City of Willoughby Hills, Ohio, maliciously and with intent to injure, ridicule and defame the Plaintiffs, described the Plaintiffs in an open public council meeting as the following:

"'malcontents that by using the recall process attempted to overthrow the government of Willoughby Hills' "

An answer was filed on behalf of appellee.

Requests for admission were submitted to both the appellant and plaintiff Szabo on or about January 11, 1980.

No answers were supplied to the request for admissions by appellant or plaintiff Szabo.

A pre-trial hearing was scheduled for February 15, 1980. On February 6, 1980, appellant Kondrat and plaintiff Szabo filed a motion for continuance. Appellant's claimed need for the continuance was "because (of) Plaintiff Kondrat's heavy work schedule in the Ohio Supreme Court."

Additionally, appellant objected to having pre-trial conference within Lake County and the judge scheduled for the hearing, Judge John M. Parks.

On February 15, 1980, the pre-trial was conducted before Judge Ross D. Avellone.

At this hearing the trial judge did not issue any final judgments as to the claims and defenses of the parties based on the cause of action filed. The trial judge did rule on motions and procedural matters, one of the motions being the extension of time and objection to the court and judge by the appellant. The trial court's entry states:

"Plaintiffs' motion for extension of time and 'Objection of the Court and Judge' as filed February 6, 1980 is hereby overruled and denied in part and found to be moot in part, to wit;

"The request to remove the hearing from the County of Lake is hereby denied and overruled;

"The Court finds that inasmuch as the within case was assigned to the undersigned Judge for reasons other than those advanced by plaintiff and thereby Judge John M. Parks is no longer hearing same, that said portion of motion is thereby moot;

"Further, that the request for continuance not being granted and said hearing already been had, such continuance is thereby rendered moot.

"The Court further finds that the pre-trial hearing was had this 15th day of February, 1980, as regularly docketed, with the defendant and his counsel present and plaintiffs failing to appear or attend although not having any prior leave of Court or permission for such non-appearance."

Appellant appealed the denial of his motion for continuance to this court in Case No. 8-006. Appellee filed a motion to dismiss the appeal because the judgment entry appealed was not a final, appealable order. This court granted the motion to dismiss.

Appellant next requested the Ohio Supreme Court review the decision, but that court refused jurisdiction.

Granting of continuance is within the sound discretion of the trial court. *State v. Kehn* (1977), 50 Ohio St. 2d 11; *State, ex rel. Buck v. McCabe et al.* (1942), 140 Ohio St. 535.

Thus far in the proceedings we find no error prejudicial to the appellant. As indicated there were no final judgments at the pre-trial for which the appellant was not present and where his first motion for continuance was overruled. At this hearing appellee filed a motion to dismiss and a motion for summary judgment and the matter was properly set down for future hearing by the trial judge, as indicated by the trial court's entry filed for record February 19, 1980:

"Motions as filed by defendant in open Court this 15th day of February, 1980, in the nature of a judgment on the pleadings, summary judgment and motion to dismiss are hereby set for hearing on brief written statements in support or opposition thereto, pursuant to Civil Rule 7(B), to be submitted no later than February 26, 1980."

From this point on the proceedings at the trial level were in regard to the motion to dismiss and motion for summary judgment. The appellant filed an additional motion captioned "Motion for extension of time and plaintiff's objection of the court and judge—second time." It appears that this second motion of appellant is directed to

the same hearing already held, the pre-trial hearing. It cannot be determined from reading the motion whether it is directed towards any other dates subsequent to said motion. It is this motion that appellant claims was not ruled upon and is the subject of appellant's only assignment of error.

For clarity, the motion filed February 20, 1980 is reproduced in total as follows:

"Gross abuse of power of the Lake County judicial system is well established. The prosecutor's office has been labeled a rubber-stamp operation by former Grand Jury Foreman; the recent Macko trial in which the presiding Judge refused to withdraw, although he is a named defendant in a related action and; judicial interference into a Grand Jury's proceedings to obstruct justice are all signs of a polluted system.

"The necessity and urgency of the Lake County judicial system to rescue not only the defendant in this action, but all defendants involved in the Recall litigation is understandable. For it is not only the defendants that are on trial, it is also the Lake County judiciary that is on trial. Consequently, justice is not possible under these circumstances.

"The Macko trial is an example of what may be expected when the fox is let into the hen house. This Plaintiff will not permit another chicken-coop caper. The court is asked to remove the captioned case from Lake County and from the assigned judge. This case is to be reassigned to a court and judge *meeting the satisfaction of the Plaintiff.*"

The record indicates the appellant replied to appellee's motion to dismiss and motion for summary judgment, but

without documents or evidence as per Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 56. In that reply appellant refers again to the first motion for continuance as if it was in regards to a trial. As stated before, this particular hearing was a pre-trial. There was no final judgment entered at that hearing. Appellant did not attack in a proper manner the motion for summary judgment which was pending before the trial court.

We come now to the conclusion of the proceedings at the trial level and the trial court, by judgment entry of September 10, 1980, disposed of all motions including the motion for summary judgment in its judgment entry as follows:

"Defendant's motions as made in open Court February 15, 1980 and filed February 19, 1980 are hereby found to be well taken as hereinafter set forth.

"Motion to Dismiss—this motion is hereby granted pursuant to Rule 12.9 of the Rules of Practice of the Common Pleas Court for Lake County for failure of plaintiffs to appear at the regularly set pre-trial of February 15, 1980 with no valid excuse being offered.

"Motion for Summary Judgment—this motion is hereby granted on the basis that this is an action based on libel *per quod* and therefore special damages and economic loss must be pleaded and proved and plaintiffs have admitted through requests for admissions that they have not suffered any financial harm as a result of the remarks of defendant.

"Motion for Summary Judgment based on legislative privilege (sic)—this motion is hereby granted for the reason that admissions established that defendant was a legislator making a statement relative to a piece of legislation under consideration at a legisla-



tive meeting and therefore the case of *Tanner vs Gault* 20 Ohio App. 243 controls.

"The Court has ruled on all motions even though a ruling on any one motion in defendant's favor would dispose of the matter because an unrul'd upon motion might be procedurally confusing in this case."

Even if the court's ruling on motion to dismiss because of failure of appellant to appear at the pre-trial hearing was error, we must still consider the court's judgment as to the motion for summary judgment. That judgment appears on the record to be legally sound. There is no assignment of error directed to it but the appellant chose to bring his appeal on the grounds that he was denied continuance and change of judges.

As indicated hereinbefore, the matter of continuance is within the sound discretion of the trial court and we cannot say that the trial court erred as the proceedings unfolded and the events occurred in the record of the instant case. In addition, a different judge was assigned.

For the foregoing reasons we overrule appellant's assignment of error and affirm the judgment of the trial court.

Judgment affirmed.

O'NEILL, P. J., of the Seventh  
Appellate District, concurs;  
VICTOR, J., of the Ninth  
Appellate District, concurs;  
Sitting by Assignment.

APPROVED:

/s/ JOSEPH DONOFRIO

*Judge of the Seventh Appellate  
District, Sitting by Assignment*

**JUDGMENT ENTRY OF THE COURT  
OF COMMON PLEAS**

(Filed September 10, 1980)

Case No. 79 CIV 0087

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
LAKE COUNTY, OHIO**

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**ROBERT J. KONDRAT, et al,**  
*Plaintiff,*

**vs**

**MORTON O'RYAN,**  
*Defendant.*

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**JUDGMENT ENTRY**

Defendant's motions as made in open Court February 15, 1980 and filed February 19, 1980 are hereby found to be well taken as hereinafter set forth.

Motion to Dismiss—this motion is hereby granted pursuant to Rule 12.9 of the Rules of Practice of the Common Pleas Court for Lake County for failure of plaintiffs to appear at the regularly set pre-trial of February 15, 1980 with no valid excuse being offered.

Motion for Summary Judgment—this motion is hereby granted on the basis that this is an action based on libel *per quod* and therefore special damages and economic loss must be pleaded and proved and plaintiffs have admitted through requests for admissions that they have not suffered any financial harm as a result of the remarks of defendant.

Motion for Summary Judgment based on legislative privilege—this motion is hereby granted for the reason that admissions established that defendant was a legislator making a statement relative to a piece of legislation under consideration at a legislative meeting and therefore the case of *Tanner vs Gault* 20 Ohio App. 243 controls.

The Court has ruled on all motions even though a ruling on any one motion in defendant's favor would dispose of the matter because an unrulred upon motion might be procedurally confusing in this case.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

/s/ ROSS D. AVELLONE

*Judge*

**JOURNAL ENTRY OF THE COURT OF APPEALS  
OF LAKE COUNTY, OHIO**

(Filed April 27, 1981)

Case No. 8-107

**IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO  
ELEVENTH DISTRICT**

---

**ROBERT J. KONDRAT,**  
*Plaintiff-Appellant,*

vs.

**MORTON O'RYAN,**  
*Defendant-Appellee.*

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**JOURNAL ENTRY**

For the reasons stated in the opinion rendered herein, the assignment of error is overruled and it is the judgment and order of this Court that the judgment of the Common Pleas Court of Lake County, Ohio, is affirmed.

Costs to be taxed against appellant.

/s/ JOSEPH DONOFRIO, Judge, of the  
Seventh Appellate District, Sit-  
ting by Assignment—for the  
Court.

A11

**ORDER OF THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO  
OVERRULING MOTION TO CERTIFY RECORD**

(Dated September 16, 1981)

No. 81-802

**THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO  
THE STATE OF OHIO, CITY OF COLUMBUS.**

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**ROBERT J. KONDRAT,**  
*Appellant,*

vs.

**MORTON O'RYAN,**  
*Appellee.*

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**MOTION FOR AN ORDER DIRECTING  
THE COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR LAKE COUNTY  
TO CERTIFY ITS RECORD**

**It is ordered by the Court that this motion is over-  
ruled.**

**ORDER OF THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO  
DISMISSING APPEAL**

(Dated September 16, 1981)

No. 81-802

THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO  
THE STATE OF OHIO, CITY OF COLUMBUS.

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ROBERT J. KONDRAT,  
*Appellant,*

vs.

MORTON O'RYAN,  
*Appellee.*

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**APPEAL FROM THE COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR LAKE COUNTY**

This cause, here on appeal as of right from the Court of Appeals for Lake County, was heard in the manner prescribed by law, and, no motion to dismiss such appeal having been filed, the Court sua sponte dismisses the appeal for the reason that no substantial constitutional question exists herein.